

CALIFORNIA DROUGHT UPDATE

MAY 31, 2022

Current Conditions

- January, February, and March 2022 were the driest on record dating back over 100 years, with just six inches of precipitation observed across the Sierra Nevada.
- Statewide precipitation for the water year to date is 72 percent of average. Sierra-Cascades snowpack for the water year to date is 7 percent of average. Statewide reservoir storage is 70 percent of average for this time of year.
- All of California's 58 counties are under a drought emergency proclamation. Californians are being asked to reduce their water use by 15 percent over 2020 levels to protect water reserves and help maintain critical flows for fish and wildlife wherever possible.
- As of May 31, the state's voluntary household dry well reporting system received reports of 86 dry wells in the past 30 days. Forty-three dry wells were reported in Fresno County alone.

The California Drought Update is a weekly roundup of conditions, state actions and upcoming developments. It is produced by an interagency team that includes the California Natural Resources Agency, the California Environmental Protection Agency, the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the Department of Water Resources, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the State Water Resources Control Board and the Department of Public Health. For the latest on drought, please visit www.drought.ca.gov. For tips and resources for conserving water, please visit www.saveourwater.com.

Recent Events and State Actions

Save Our Water messaging reaches Californians statewide (Memorial Day weekend): Water conservation messages were viewed by millions of Californians over the Memorial Day weekend thanks to Caltrans electronic signs deployed during daytime hours on freeways statewide. The signs called attention to severe drought conditions and urged Californians to save water.



State Water Board and Department of Water Resources (DWR) coordinate with local officials to anticipate drought impacts and prevent drinking water emergencies: On May 26, the Board and DWR hosted an informational workshop for county executives on the expected impacts of drought and the importance of a proactive response. DWR Director Karla Nemeth and State Water Board Chair Joaquin Esquivel provided opening remarks, and presenters covered topics such as dry well forecasting, funding opportunities, and new tools to monitor drought impacts. Board and DWR staff encouraged county leaders to submit proposals as early as possible for the board's [County-wide and Regional Funding Program](#) in order to address water shortage and contamination issues in communities served by state small water systems and domestic wells before they become emergencies. The Board and DWR will host [another workshop on June 2](#) to provide guidance on County Drought Plans for state small water systems and domestic wells as required under SB 552. Interested parties may visit the [Regional Funding Page](#) to access the presentation slides and workshop recording.

Workshop on Scott and Shasta watershed instream flows: The State Water Board's Division of Water Rights on **May 25** held a [workshop](#) to receive public input on proposed changes to the emergency regulation to establish instream flows and curtail unauthorized water diversions in the Scott and Shasta river watersheds. The Board is tentatively planning to consider readoption of the emergency regulation on **June 21**, before the current emergency regulation expires in August 2022. More information is available at the Board's [Scott and Shasta Drought Website](#).

Water Board adopts emergency water conservation regulation (May 24): The State Water Board [adopted new regulations](#) that target ornamental turf and spur more aggressive water conservation measures by some local water agencies. The regulations ban irrigating turf at commercial, industrial, and institutional properties, such as grass in front of or next to large industrial or commercial buildings. The ban does not include watering turf that is used for recreation or other community purposes, water used at residences or water to maintain trees. The regulations also require all urban water suppliers to implement conservation actions under Level 2 of their Water Shortage Contingency Plans, a level meant to address a water supply shortage of up to 20 percent. Urban water suppliers are required to fast-track supply and demand assessments to plan for potential extended dry conditions. Some water suppliers already have imposed strong new restrictions on customers' water use in accordance with their drought management plans. However, about half of the state's 436 water suppliers (both urban water retailers and wholesalers) have not yet activated Level 2, and 36 have not submitted drought plans. The emergency regulation will require suppliers without drought plans to take certain conservation actions, such as conducting outreach to customers about conservation, restricting outdoor irrigation to two days a week and enforcing against wasteful water practices. The approved regulations will be submitted to the Office of Administrative Law for approval, which typically occurs within 10 calendar days. The ban on non-functional turf becomes effective upon OAL approval and the Level Two requirements for urban water suppliers are proposed to take effect on **June 10**.

Recent Events and State Actions

Curtailments adjustments (ongoing): As drought conditions persist, the State Water Board continues to monitor six critical watersheds where worsening conditions may threaten water supplies. Curtailments remain in effect in the Delta watershed, two sub-watersheds of the Delta, and in the Shasta River watershed. Based on current conditions and available forecasts, curtailments in the Russian River watershed are temporarily suspended through **June 15** and curtailments in the Scott River watershed are temporarily suspended through **May 27**. Water Board staff will continue to adjust curtailment orders as conditions change.



Tribal / Local Actions

- **Tribal governments:** Tribal emergency drought proclamations as reported by Cal OES to date: Buena Vista Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians, Karuk Tribe, Resighini Rancheria, Tule River Indian Tribe, Yurok Tribe, Wiyot Tribe.
- **Local government:** Local emergency drought proclamations as reported by Cal OES to date: Butte, Colusa, Fresno, Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Madera, Marin, Mendocino, Modoc, Napa, Nevada, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Siskiyou, Sonoma, Tulare, Tuolumne, Yolo.

Upcoming Decisions / Milestones

Improved snowmelt forecasting: DWR and the Western States Water Council will host a workshop in Salt Lake City on **June 1** with the National Weather Service on federal agency programs for improving snowmelt runoff forecasting.

County drought planning: DWR hosts a workshop on new requirements of SB 552, the 2021 law that requires small water suppliers to develop drought contingency plans. At the **June 2** workshop, DWR will be seeking input from counties as it drafts an SB 552 compliance guidebook for counties.

Key Data Points and Resources

- Daily Hydrological & Climate Information summary: <http://cdec.water.ca.gov/reportapp/javareports?name=DLYHYDRO>
- Statewide water conditions: http://cdec.water.ca.gov/water_cond.html
- Daily Reservoir Storage Summary: <https://cdec.water.ca.gov/reservoir.html>
- Water Year Forecast and Monthly Distribution: <http://cdec.water.ca.gov/reportapp/javareports?name=B120DIST>
- Monthly water supplier reports on water production and conservation: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/conservation_portal/conservation_reporting.html
- Latest groundwater conditions and information: <https://sgmatest.water.ca.gov/CalGWLIVE/>
- Information on state drought actions and assistance: <https://www.drought.ca.gov>
- Conservation tips and resources for consumers: <https://saveourwater.com/>